

necessarily involve antagonism to the Church. Even Luther had at first cherished the idea of reformation from within. Luther soon learned to know better, and hurled defiance at Antichrist. Erasmus clung to the same idea even after Luther had broken with it. Such reformers had hitherto found that to attempt a reform within the Church, especially the reformation of the pope and the curia, was to swim against the tide. The Council that was at last to set things right never met, or only met at Trent when it was too late to bridge the gulf between Papists and Protestants. Briçonnet speedily discovered, after the defeat of Pavia had thrown the reins into the hands of Francis' mother, Louise of Savoy, that heresy such as Lefevre and his disciple Farel taught, would cost him his see and probably his life, and, unlike Luther, he gave up the contest and refrained from such dangerous innovations in deference to the decrees of the Sorbonne and the Parliament of Paris. In 1525 he damned Luther, who had already been condemned by the Sorbonne in 1521, and publicly retracted his errors. Lefevre fled to Strassburg. Some of his disciples, less fortunate, or more heroic, notably Jacques Pavannes, were burned for heresy.

The policy of repression, which was to rend France for a century, was thus inaugurated by the Sorbonne and the Parliament of Paris. This policy found, however, an occasional check in the humanist sympathies and the political necessities of Francis I. Francis did not love the bigoted doctors of the Sorbonne; he did love very passionately his sister Marguerite, who ridiculed these doctors, and felt a keen sympathy with heretic reformers and freethinkers; he joined in his sister's laugh at their expense. He was, moreover, an enthusiastic humanist, and patronised the new tendencies of the age; he was not sorry to check the heresy hunters of the Parliament in the exercise of his absolute power. Besides, whether he liked heresy or not, he was forced at times to cultivate the alliance of the Lutheran princes of Germany and the reformed Swiss confederates, and this Philo-Lutheran policy involved the toleration of heretics. Thus, by policy or intellectual sympathy, he was for a time but an indifferent persecutor. From both motives he sought for a season, after his liberation from his prison at Madrid, to hold the balance